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WHY DISFRANCHISE THE NEGRO?

[By J. W. Cooper, B. S. D.]

The Negro race in America, by a fair historical estimate of its achievements, stand among the great pillars in the temple of national liberty and sovereignty. This is no groundless eulogy, but a fact that may be ascertained upon inquiry. People personally by class or by race, are worth actually what they make, and we calculate their importance in the country of their nativity or adoption by the relative value of their productions. There is really no other valid testimony on this point. And in the light of it the Negro population shows to very fine advantage. It has labored long and diligently, through, perhaps unconsciously, to give this nation weight in the commerce of the earth and probably no other people has contributed more liberally toward this end. Indeed the whole result of its labor have been in the forms of contribution and in that respect has not been surpassed. The Negroes in this country have, year in and year out, through a century, produced the equivalent of well nigh countless millions of dollars, and yet no other people has less to show in the way of wealth for their expenditure of energy and genius. This is largely owing to the fact that they were for many years slaves; and it required a long time to outlive the effects of absolute servitude. Nothing is mor, debasing. And now, after a heroic struggle of thirty odd years to escape the consequences of previous conditions, they are beaten back by disfranchisement, which is the modern form of nullification. This is disheartening in the extreme. No wonder the American people have a race problem they are likely to have as long as the aspiration of a race, roused and encouraged by their national constitution, are thwarted and crushed. You cannot enlighten and elevate a people by wresting from them the privileges that excite ambition and ennoble effort. Disfranchisement, wherever practical, is a long step in the way of driving the Negro back to what is constitutionally termed his "previous conditions of servitude." Not that he is again made slave by it, but the with holding of his liberty makes him equivalent of one. It took some time to emancipate the Negro and his disfranchisement has been a gradual development. It has at length, however, reached the stage of a factor in the race problem and a leading question in national politics. What is the peculiarity of education that qualifies one to vote? The writing of a name, the spelling of a word or reading a book does not acquaint us with the mysteries of government, or does intelligent voting depend on knowing the sciences of government? The truth is people in a general way are wrong in estimating the requisites of a voter. They are neither reading nor writing that makes one fit to vote. Any citizen of this country who is capable of continuously supporting the government is capable of participating in the selection of its officials. It is claimed that the Negro on the plantations is illiterate because he writes and awkward fist, stumbles in reading and falls down in orthography. The reading and writing are easy sailing, but who is it that does not make a mess of orthography? The very men who

write editorials in advocacy of disfranchising the Negro for his inability to construct words and sentences accurately are spared many a thrust of the critic by the expert workman who put their articles in shape for printing. "But what have these things to do with policies the affect for good will the lives of individuals and foreshadows the destinies of Nations?" Nothing whatever, and it is a shame that they should weigh a feather's hft in depriving men of their justly acquired and constitutional rights. The Negroes of the South have liberally paid the price of the ballot and they are constitutionally entitled to it;

It is likely, nor is it possible, that these people, uneducated and untrained could have given the Southern plantations the weight it has in the wealth of the world. They are not only tillers of the soil for the production of cotton, but are the master minds that comprehend all the conditions of weather, climate and planting. What ever measure of wealth the South has enjoyed has been acquired by the long successive cotton crops raised on her plantations and the lord of the plantation, whether serf or freeman, is the Negro for he alone knows the moods and capabilities. The farmer of the West is not on such close terms with his soil, climate and atmosphere as the Negro of the South with his surroundings of this character, because they are not the only environment essential to his best development.

It is frequently the case that professional men and mechanics fall short of their ambition and the easy reach of their faculties by being misplaced in advocacy. But you never heard of a southern Negro missing the high rank of cultivating a cotton crop. If ever a man knows his business, he does.

In this too he is autocrat, for he is the only one who understands it. In the olden times he was ruled by an overseer, but as a free man he works to a better advantage. By the work, the Negro on the plantations has given the Southern States the imperishable reputation of supplying all the markets of the world with one of the greatest of staple products. Yet this man is disfranchised.

The men who are active in depriving the Negro of his vote are depending for their progress on the productiveness of their land, and the Negro with the sun and the rain, his through successive generations drawn from it millions on millions of dollars. From this vast mass of wealth turned out from year to year without intermission, have come the enterprise and learning of the Southern States and most of the thrust of the Northern States is attributable to it. We read in history of the South's brilliancy in statesmanship, its military prestige, its political domination, its renown in literature and its unequalled hospitality. But is not the Negro in the field behind these splendid manifestations?

The colored race of the South which has created the commerce of cotton has this high endowment. It constructs edifices which educate the youth of the country and it supports the system by which education is attained. Without its great contributions that part of the country would not have known anything in political powers and its standing in literature, statesmanship and merchandise would be much lower than it is. No master of music has a more intimate acquaintance with the laws of harmony than the Negro on the plantation with the art of cultivation. Is he a learned man? If he is not, then the contributors to our store of knowledge, entertainments and all things indispensable, are not learned men. Then, if a race which has been the very foundation of this

country in war and in peace, is forced to give up its liberty and be considered as merely existing in its country without due privileges, after having made it possible for others to enjoy the blessings of life, to deprive him of this freedom is one of the greatest crimes against humanity. He certainly knows enough to vote.

THE LAW OF MOSES. By Rev. Harrison Green.

In reference to the past, it is all important, for the proper understanding of the law, to remember its entire dependence on the Abrahamic covenant, and its adaptation thereto, Gal. 3: 17-24, and this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.

Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid; for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

Wherefore the law was our school master to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

That covenant had a two-fold character. It contained the spiritual promise "of the Messiah, which was given to the Jews as representatives of the whole human race.

But it contained also the temporal promises subsidiary to the former. These promises were special, given distinctively to the Jews as a nation.

It follows that there should be in the law a corresponding quality of nature.

The nature of this relation of the law to the promise is clearly pointed out. The belief in God as the redeemer of man; and the hope of his manifestation as such in the person of the Messiah, involves the belief that the spiritual power must be superior to all carnal obstructions and that there was in man a spiritual element which could rule his life by communion with a spirit from above. But it involved also the idea of an antagonistic power of evil from which man was to be redeemed, existing in each individual, and existing in the world at large.

Nor is it less essential to remark the period of the history at which it was given. It marked and determined the transition of Israel from the condition of a tribe to that of a nation, and its definite assumption of a distinct position and office in the history of the world.

Yet, though new in its conception, it was probably not wholly new in its materials. There must necessarily have been, before the law, commandments and revelations of a fragmentary character, under which Israel had hitherto grown up. It is the peculiar mark of legislative genius to mold by fundamental principles, and animate by a higher

inspiration, materials previously existing in a cruder state. So far, therefore, as they were consistent with the objects of the Jewish law, the customs of Palestine and the laws of Egypt would doubtless be traceable in the Mosaic system.

In close connection with and almost in consequence of this reference to antiquity we find an accommodation of the law to the temper and circumstances of the Israelites, to which our Lord refers in the case of divorce (Matt. 19: 7-8) They say unto him, why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorce, and to put her away?

He saith unto them, "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so," as necessarily interfering with its absolute perfection.

In many cases it rather should be said to guide and modify existing usages than actually to sanction them; and the ignorance of their existence may lead to a conception of its ordinances not only erroneous, but actually the reverse of the truth. Nor is it less noticeable that the degree of prominence, given to each part of the Mosaic system, has a similar reference to the period at which the nation had arrived. The ceremonial portion is marked out distinctly and with elaboration, the moral and criminal law is clearly and sternly decisive; even the civil so far as it relates to individuals, is systematic; because all these were called for by the past growth of the nation, and needed in order to settle and develop its resources. But the political and constitutional law is comparatively imperfect; a few leading principles are laid down, to be developed hereafter but the law is directed rather to sanction the various powers of the state, than to define and balance their operations.

In close connection with this subject we observe also the gradual process by which the law was revealed to the Israelites. Ju 20-23, in direct connection with revelation from Mount Sinai, that which may be called the rough outline of the Mosaic is given by God, solemnly recorded by Moses, and accepted by the people.

In Ex. 25-31, there is a similar outline of the Mosaic ceremonial. On the basis of these it may be conceived that the fabric of the Mosaic system gradually grew up under the requirements of the time. The first revelation of the law in any thing like a perfect form is found in the book of Deuteronomy. Yet even then the revelation was not final; it was the duty of the prophets to amend and explain it in special points (Ez.) and to bring out more clearly its great principles.

In its own intrinsic character, are the thoughts of men directly and immediately to the will of God.

It follows from this, that it is to be regarded not merely as a law, that is, a rule of conduct based on known truth and acknowledged authority, but also as a revelation of God's nature and his dispensations. But this theocratic character of the law depends necessarily on the belief in God, as not only the creator and sustainer of the world, but as, by special covenant the head of the Jewish nation. This immediate reference to God as their king, is clearly seen as the ground work of their whole polity.

Continued Next Week.

N. E. A. PLATFORM.

Policy of Progress and Hope

The National Educational Association declares its policy thru a seven sectioned platform. And, we would have our readers to and consider carefully their importance. For our future depends largely upon our systems of education. The Association speaks, thru its platform, as follows:

1 The United States bureau of education has amply proved its usefulness to the nation. Its publications are standard works of reference for school officers and teachers everywhere. It should be made an independent administrative department, such as were the departments of agriculture and of labor before their elevation to cabinet rank. Sufficient appropriations should be made by congress to enable the commissioner of education to extend the scope and add to the usefulness of his work.

2 The condition of affairs in the Indian Territory, where fully three quarters of the population are reported as being without schools for their children, demands the immediate attention of congress. Provision should be speedily made by which the people of the Indian Territory will have power to establish and carry on a system of public schools so that all classes of citizens in the Indian Territory may have the educational opportunities which are enjoyed by their fellow citizens in other parts of the country.

3 Teaching in the public schools will not be a suitably attractive and permanent career, nor will it command as much of the ability of the country as it should until the teachers are properly compensated and are assured of an undisturbed tenure during efficiency and good behavior. A large of the teachers reward must always be the pleasure in the character and quality of the work done; but the money compensation of the teacher should be sufficient to maintain an appropriate standard of living. Legislative measures to give support to these principles deserve the approval of press and the people.

4 The true source of the strength of any system of public education lies in the regard of the people whom it immediately serves, and in their willingness to make sacrifices for it. For this reason a large share of the cost of maintaining public schools should be borne by a local tax laid by the county or the town in which the schools are. State aid is to be regarded as supplementary to, and not a substitute for, local taxation for school purposes. In many parts of the United States a large increase in the amount of the local tax now voted for school purposes, or the levying of such a tax where none now exists, is a pressing need, if there are to be better schools and better teachers.

5. The highest ethical standards of conduct and of speech should be insisted upon among teachers. It is not becoming that commercialism or self-seeking should shape their actions, or that intemperance should mark their utterances. A code of professional conduct clearly understood and rigidly enforced by public opinion is being slowly developed and will doubtless one day control all teachers worthy of the name.

6. It is important that school buildings and school grounds should be plan-